

Millbrook Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106436
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	324399
Inspection date	10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	196
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	29
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr G Billings
Headteacher	Mrs Gabrielle Gray
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Elmfield Shevington Wigan Lancashire WN6 8DL
Telephone number	01257 404552
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of teaching and the curriculum on progress, standards and achievement; the quality and impact of leadership and management on enabling pupils to progress well and on sustaining high achievement and standards. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work, including lessons; discussion with governors, members of staff and pupils; the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own judgements, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves a residential area of mainly owner-occupied housing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is considerably below average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small proportion from other heritages. Early Years Foundation Stage education is provided in the Reception class.

The school holds The Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, the Artsmark and its local authority's Quality Mark for Early Years provision.

There is privately managed extended childcare provision on site which was subject to separate inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, with several outstanding features. An ethos of self-respect and care for others is central to its happy and effective learning community. Pupils thrive in this supportive environment. This is shown clearly in their good academic progress and in their excellent personal and social development.

Children enter school with skills below those typical of children of their age. They make good progress across the school and consistently reach above average standards overall by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well in both Key Stages 1 and 2 as a result of the very good provision made for them in this inclusive school. Pupils in all year groups make good progress and achieve well in reading, mathematics and science. They make slightly slower progress in writing and their attainment in writing is not as strong as it is in the other subjects. Teachers' assessments and provisional test results indicate that in 2008 the proportion of pupils who reached the higher levels in writing in assessments at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 was below average.

Pupils' good overall achievement results from good teaching, an excellent curriculum which engages their interests very well and excellent pastoral care that helps them to be confident and secure. Teachers give clear directions and use questions well to support the development of pupils' thinking skills. They provide extremely effective guidance, pointing pupils to the next steps in their learning and showing them how to improve their work. Pupils' progress is assessed and tracked carefully, so that underachievement may be identified and addressed promptly. Lessons are planned well to take into account pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils respond very positively to the school's vibrant curriculum, saying that learning is interesting and fun. Teachers and pupils use information and communication technology well as an aid to teaching and learning. The school has made writing its main priority for improvement and the curriculum now provides very good opportunities for pupils to apply and improve their writing skills across a range of subjects. This is work in progress and although improvements are already starting to be seen in the quality of pupils' written work, it is too early to evaluate its full impact. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from good additional support in lessons and effective individual learning programmes. Teaching assistants, working in partnership with class teachers, make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning mean that lessons run smoothly and playtimes are happy occasions. Pupils develop excellent social skills and moral values in this extremely caring school. Their spiritual development is nurtured very well through regular opportunities for reflection in assemblies, discussion times and lessons. They have a good awareness of world faiths. The school's partnership with an inner-city school in a neighbouring local authority is helping to prepare pupils well for life in a multicultural society. A strong emphasis on valuing each individual ensures that pupils grow in confidence and form very good quality relationships with staff and with each other. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, acting, for example, as school councillors or as sports leaders. The school addresses community cohesion well. There is a range of partnerships that promote pupils' well-being, involvement and participation in community activities and good links with the high school and its inner-city partner school. Pupils have an excellent awareness of issues of personal safety and healthy lifestyles and a good understanding of ecological issues. They collaborate well in groups and when working with a partner in lessons.

These important personal skills, together with their good basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, mean that pupils are prepared well for the future.

Excellent pastoral care ensures that pupils feel happy and secure in school. The school complies fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Parents express great confidence in the school and appreciate the good channels of communication between home and school.

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, setting an ambitious agenda for excellence and ensuring that the school succeeds well in its efforts to promote equality and to celebrate diversity. The staff team and proactive, knowledgeable governors share and value her vision and work effectively with her towards its achievement. Senior staff help to assure the quality of all aspects of the school's work and staff at all levels are starting to contribute well to this process. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is underpinned by regular assessment and review. School improvement targets are challenging and planning is strategic and creative. These factors combine to give the school good capacity for continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make a flying start to their education in the Reception class. They make rapid progress, achieve extremely well and gain very positive attitudes to learning. From starting points that are below those typical for their age group, they go on to develop skills across all the areas of learning that by the end of the year are above expected levels. Good links are in place with the onsite pre-school and parents appreciate the carefully planned induction procedures that enable their children to settle quickly and happily into their new surroundings. The school's excellent home-school partnerships are forged in the Reception class. Parents are supported very well to become involved in their children's learning through workshops and informative communications. Excellent leadership and management, effective teamwork and an extremely good understanding of how young children learn, help to create a stimulating environment in which children of all abilities make progress. A nurturing ethos and the excellent provision for their welfare, which fully meets requirements, enable children to feel safe and secure. Detailed observations of children's progress, interests and achievements help staff to plan activities that are tailored to each child's unique learning needs, with appropriate levels of challenge. Children are encouraged to develop independence and critical thinking. They become absorbed in stimulating activities, both indoors and out, which involve them in problem solving, investigation and discovery. Learning is great fun and children showed this, for example, as they enthusiastically sang nursery rhymes in French and acted out a fairy tale they had invented for themselves. Transition to Key Stage 1 is planned carefully and managed well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me and my colleague so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We discovered that Millbrook is a good school, with many outstanding features and that you are receiving a good education. These are some of the things we found to be particularly good.

- In the Reception class the children get off to a great start!
- Standards are above average across the school, although they are not yet quite as good in writing as in the other subjects.
- The school is run well; you have a headteacher and governors who provide very effective leadership and work well to help all the staff to make the school successful.
- Good teaching and your outstanding curriculum make your lessons interesting and this helps you to do well.
- The grown-ups in school look after you very well.
- You are extremely well-behaved, caring and helpful young people and this helps to make Millbrook a happy school.

I have asked the headteacher and the staff to work with you all in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to help you all with your writing skills. They have already started to do this and your writing has started to improve, but there is still some more to do to make it the best it can possibly be. Keep up the good work and carry on being happy learners.

Thank you all for your help with the inspection.

With my best wishes for the future